

It is claimed:

1. A clip assembly for use with a panel system, comprising:
 - a first clip member having an upright member and an upper flange member and a lower flange member extending therefrom, the first clip member adapted to engage a panel;
 - a second clip member having an upright member and an upper flange member and a lower flange member extending therefrom, the second clip upright member and upper flange member adapted to cooperate with a panel, the lower flange member of the second clip member extending in a substantially same direction as the lower flange member of the first clip member; and
 - a gap formed between the upright member of the first clip member and the upright member of the second clip member,
 - wherein the first clip member and the second clip member constrain adjoining panels of the panel system against forces.
2. The clip assembly of claim 1 wherein the upper flange member of the first clip member and the upper flange member of the second clip member are free of contact with panels except when upward forces on the panels cause contact.
3. The clip assembly of claim 2 wherein a gap is present between the upper flange members and the panels, thereby rendering the upper flange members free of contact with the panels
4. The clip assembly of claim 1, wherein the first clip member and the second clip member allow for movement of the adjoining panels in the longitudinal direction due to thermal expansion and contraction of the panels.

5. The clip assembly of claim 1, wherein the first clip member and the second clip member allow for movement of the adjoining panels in a transverse direction.

6. The clip assembly of claim 1, wherein:

the lower flange member of the first clip member includes at least one hole;

the lower flange member of the second clip member includes at least one hole aligned with at least one hole of the lower flange member of the first clip member; and

the lower flange member of the second clip member is positioned beneath the lower flange member of the first clip member.

7. The clip assembly of claim 4, wherein the lower flange member of the first clip member includes a stepped portion.

8. The clip assembly of claim 7, wherein the stepped portion is a raised portion which elevates an adjoining panel of the panel system.

9. The clip assembly of claim 7, further comprising a base member positioned beneath the lower flange member of the second clip member, the base member having at least one hole which is in alignment with at least one hole of the lower flange member of the first clip member and the lower flange member of the second clip member.

10. The clip assembly of claim 9, wherein the base member includes a stepped portion on an opposing end with respect to at least one hole of the base member; the stepped portion of the lower flange of the first clip member and the stepped portion of the base member are substantially a same height.

11. The clip assembly of claim 9, wherein the second clip member includes a punched portion in the upright member, the punched portion having a horizontal surface and a downward extending, vertical leg.

12. The clip assembly of claim 11, wherein:

the lower flange member of the first clip member includes a stepped portion; and

the horizontal surface of the punched portion is substantially a same height as the stepped portion of the lower flange member of the first clip member.

13. The clip assembly of claim 1, further comprising:

a first base member having a downward extending hook portion;

a second base member positioned beneath the first base member, the second base member having stepped or raised portions at opposing ends, where

the lower flange member of the first clip member and the lower flange member of the second clip member are hooked portions nested within one another; and

the downward extending hook portion of the first base member slideably engages at least the hooked portion of the first clip member.

14. The clip assembly of claim 13, wherein the first base member and the second base member have at least one aligning hole and the stepped portions are positioned on opposing sides of the first and second clip member.

15. The clip assembly of claim 1, further comprising:

a base member having a stepped portion at one end and an upstanding leg on an opposing end; and

a sliding member having a stepped portion at a first end which is substantially a same height as the stepped portion of the base member, the sliding member further having a channel associated with the stepped portion,

the lower flange member of the first clip member and the second clip member slideably engage the channel such that the first clip member and the second clip member slide with respect to the base member in response to at least longitudinal movement of the adjoining panels of the panel system.

16. The clip assembly of claim 15, further comprising at least one hole formed in each of the upper flange members of the first clip member and the second clip member, the holes are adapted to receive pins which then pass into the panels that engage and cooperate with the first and second clips to thereby secure the first and second clips to the panels.

17. The clip assembly of claim 16, further comprising at least one hole formed in the main base member and the adjoining member, the at least one hole in the main base member aligning with the at least one hole in the adjoining base member.

18. The clip assembly of claim 15, further comprising a blockage material which holds the first clip member and the second clip member in a neutral position and disintegrates or breaks away once the first clip member and the second clip member are subjected to forces sufficient to cause sliding thereof.

19. The clip assembly of claim 15, further comprising:
a slot formed in the upright member of the second clip member; and
a tabbed portion extending from the base member and slideably engaging with the slot formed in the upright member of the second clip member

20. The clip assembly of claim 19, wherein movement of the first clip member and the second clip member is limited by the tabbed portion contacting ends of the slot formed in the upright member of the second clip member.

21. The slideable clip assembly for use with a panel system, comprising:

- a first clip member having an upright member having a first end and a second end, an upper flange member extending from the upper end and a lower flange member extending from the lower end;
- a second clip member having an upright member having a first end and a second end, an upper flange member extending from the upper end and a lower flange member extending from the lower end; and
- a base member having a means for communicating with at least the lower flange member of the second clip member such that the first clip member and the second clip member slide between a first position and a second position while the base member remains stationary.

22. The clip assembly of claim 21, wherein the communicating means include:

- a first base member having a downward extending hook portion;
- and
- a second base member positioned beneath the first base member, the second base member having stepped or raised portions at opposing ends, wherein

the lower flange member of the first clip member and the lower flange member of the second clip member are hooked portions nested within one another; and

the downward extending hook portion of the first base member slideably engages the hooked portion of the first clip member.

23. The clip assembly of claim 21, wherein the communicating means include:

- a secondary base member having a stepped portion at one end and an upstanding leg on an opposing end; and
- a primary base member having a channel portion at a first end thereof, which is substantially a same height as the stepped portion of the secondary base member, the lower flange members of the first clip member

and the second clip member slideably engaging with the channel, such that the first clip member and the second clip member can slide with respect to the base members in response to longitudinal movement of adjoining panels of the panel system.

24. The clip assembly of claim 23, further comprising:

- a slot formed in the upright member of the second clip member; and
- a tabbed portion extending from a base member and slideably engaging with the slot formed in the upright member of the second clip member, the engagement limiting the distance that the sliding element can travel relative to the base member.